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IBN AL-HĪTĪ'S ARABIC CHRONICLE OF KARAITE DOCTORS.

I.

THE text of Ibn al-Hitī's Chronicle is taken from the Brit. Mus. MS. Or. 2402, where it is appended to Yefeth's Commentary on the Book of Proverbs. The scribe was Moses ben Abraham, who occupied the post of precentor or "Ḥazzan" at Cairo within the memory of the present generation, for his copy of Yefeth's Commentary was finished at no earlier date than the 21st of Tebeth, A.M. 5627 (A.D. 1867), and the appended Chronicle was probably written within a few days after the completion of the Commentary. The document, however, from which the modern scribe made his copy of Ibn al-Hitī's work was of considerable antiquity, as the following note, which is found on fol. 187 b—that is, immediately before the Chronicle—clearly shows:—

והוא ממא וגרתה פה מצרים יע"א בקהלתינו הק' פי אלגניזה פי ורק
קדים מקטע אסמא אלחכמים בני מקרא יצ"ו אלסאדאת אלעטאם רחמהם
אללה תעאלי אנמעין ורצי ענהם ברצואנה אמן והא אנא נאקלה האהנא עלי
קדר אלאמכאן כלמה בכלמה וחרף בחרף מן גיר נקצאן ולא זיארדה ען מא
וגרתה מכתוב פי אלורק אלקדים ונקלתה האהנא כופא" מן אלתיציע
ואנתסאך כלאם מרתבה רח' א"ת ולאנל אלאתפאע ללאניאל אלתיה
מן בעדנא ושלום :

i.e. "And this is one of the texts which I have found here in Cairo, in the 'Genizah' of our holy congregation, on an ancient leaf, containing a brief record of the names of Karaite Doctors, may their Rock and their Redeemer preserve them: namely, the great Masters, may God, the

exalted One, have mercy on them all, and bestow his favour upon them, Amen. And behold, I copy it down as well as possible, word for word, and letter by letter, without leaving anything out, and without adding anything to what I have found written on the ancient leaf. And I copy it here for fear lest the composition of the author should perish and be lost altogether, and on account of the benefit which the coming generations may derive from it. And for the rest, peace."

But who was the Ibn al-Hitī whose Chronicle of Karaite Doctors has thus come down to us? The approximate date of his activity is supplied to us in the text itself. The "last of the learned and wise men" whom Ibn al-Hitī mentions is the famous Samuel ha-Rōfē ben Moses al-Maghrebī who was "Dayyān" at Cairo during the latter part of the fourteenth and the earlier years of the fifteenth century. From the mention of al-Maghrebī's great work, the "Sefer Mišwōth," known by the Arabic title of "Al-Murshid," besides two other important compositions of his, we may safely conclude that the present Chronicle was written during the latter part of al-Maghrebī's busy life, that is, probably between the years 1410 and 1420. With this date in our mind we are naturally led to identify our author with the scribe ¹דוד בן סעדאל בן יוסף . . . בן אלהיית whom Pinsker (Lik. Kad. p. 64) mentions as the writer of a MS. which bears the date A.H. 811², answering to 1408-9 A.D. It is also tempting to assume that the Ibn al-Hitī thus identified as David ben Sa'dal (or Sa'dēl) is a scion of Yeshu'ah Ibn Sa'dal Ibn al-Hitī, who is already quoted by Salmon ben Yesōhim, the well-known Karaite controversialist of the Saadyanic period. This view is considerably weakened by the fact that no ישועה occurs in David ben Sa'dal's genealogy as given by Pinsker, but it may on the other hand be held that the absence of the name Yeshu'ah

¹ Firkowicz, in fact, refers to our author (see note 9 on p. 433) under the name of דוד אלהיית 'ר.

² The year קכ"א A.M. in Pinsker, *loc. cit.*, is evidently a misprint for קכ"ז.

is merely due to the insufficient length of the genealogy, extending though it does over nine generations. One may take it for granted, however, that our Chronicler's family originally came from Hit, "a town situated on the Euphrates, about thirty leagues to the west of Bagdad, inhabited by Arabs and Karaite Jews¹," and from his knowledge of the writings of Samuel al-Maghrebī during this author's lifetime it appears further to follow that David Ibn al-Hitī was either settled in Egypt or in one of the surrounding countries, such as Syria or Palestine.

From the notes which I have added to the translation it will be seen that, thanks chiefly to the labours of Pinsker, Steinschneider, Neubauer, Harkavy, Bacher, and Poznański, I have been able to illustrate several of Ibn al-Hitī's statements, and also occasionally to show in what particular points the Chronicler was misled by the comparatively scanty material which he had before him. Modern scholars have in many respects an advantage over Ibn al-Hitī, who had to arrive at his facts by means of references found scattered here and there in the works which he read or copied. But the profit which we are enabled to derive from his Chronicle is undoubtedly considerable. On some well-known writers he imparts to us fresh, and sometimes interesting, information, and he besides brings before us a number of names which have not been known before. The great feature of the Chronicle is no doubt the prominence which is given in it to Yusuf ben Noah, and scholars will probably not be slow to seize on the fresh "data" now presented to us on the life and activity of this Karaite Doctor, who appears to have been the centre of a very influential and earnest band of scholars.

I need only add that the names which I have passed by without a remark in my notes belong partly to authors concerning whom I could find nothing elsewhere, and partly to well-known men, like Yūsuf al-Basīr, Yefeth Ibn

¹ See R. Hoerning, *British Museum Karaite MSS.*, p. v.

Ṣa'ir, and others, on whose life and literary labours Ibn al-Hītī has nothing fresh to tell us.

II.

¹ בשם ירי אל עולם נעשה ונצליח

נבחרתי אלמן בתרתיב אלשיך אלרשיד אבן אלהיתי רצי את ענה² ;
פדכר³ אסמא מן ידכר מן אלעלמא אלקראיין רצי את ענהם אלדי ונדת
להם דכרא" אווללהם אלסייד ענן מנוחתו כבוד אוול מן נהא בכשף אלחק
בעד תנטייתה ואקאמה והערה למות נפשו וקיל אנה כאן פי זמאן אבי
נעפר אלמנצור אלדי תולא⁴ אלכלאפה סנת דרז ללהגרה וכאן ראש גליות
כל בית ישראל פי בנדאד ורד נמאעה מן אלרבאנין אלי אלחק והו מדהב
בני מקרא יצ"ו ובעדה דניאל אלקומצי ודוד אלמקמאץ⁵ ולהו כתאב פי אצול
אלדין והאולאי קבל אלקרקסאני רחמה את לאנה דכרהם פי כתאב אלאנואר
ודכר נמאעה איצא והם אסמאעיל ואלעכבאריין ואלרסתרין⁶ ואלבנזאדיין
ואלבצריין ואלפארסיין ואלכרסאין ואהל אלגבל ואלשאמיין ולם דכר
אסמאיהם בל דכר אכתלאפהם פי אראהם : אלשיך אלעאלם יעקב בן יצחק
אלקרקסאני רח' את תאריך תצניפה אלאנוואר סנה אלף ומאיתין תמאנייה
וסבעין לשטרות פיון דלך פי סנה 110 ללהגרה ואלסייד דוד בן בעז
רח' את תצניפה קהלת פי סנה 111 ללהגרה ולה תפסיר אלתורה וכתאב
אלאצול : ואלמעלם אבו אלסרי רח' את כאן בעד סעדיה הפתומי לאנה
רד עלי⁷ אלקרקסאני פי תפסיר אלתורה ופי ספר מצות וכאן אלפיומי קבל
אלקרקסאני לאנה רד עליה ישראל בן דניאל⁸ רח' את ודכרה שלמה אלנשיא
פי כתאב אלעריות קבל⁹ אלקרקסאני ואלמעלם אבו אלסרי ואלאקרב אנה
למא דכר אלעלמא¹⁰ זל דכרהם עלי אלתרתיב לאנה דכר אוולא" ענן תם
בנימין תם דניאל תם אלקרקסאני תם אבו אלסרי תם אבו עלי אלבצרי

¹ Or. 2402, fol. 188 a.

² MS. ענה.

³ Probably for סאוכר.

⁴ For חויל, MS. חוילא.

⁵ The usual form of this word is אלמקמס or אלמקמץ.

⁶ The original form is אלוסתרין.

⁷ MS. עליה ; see note 3, p. 437.

⁸ One should expect דניאל instead of ישראל ; see the note on the translation.

⁹ MS. בעד ; see the note on the translation, *loc. cit.*

¹⁰ Fol. 188 b.

וולדה תם דוד בן בועז אלנשיא תם אלמעלם אבו עלי רחמֶה אֶת עליהם
 אנמעין ואלאקרב אנה כאן מעאצר אלשיך¹ אבו יעקב יוסף בן נח לאנה
 נאקצה פי אלאביב מנאקצה טווילה וכאן אלשיך אבו יעקב אלבציר ואלשיך
 אבו אלפרג הארון מן גמלה מן כאן ורד ללשיך אבו יעקב והאולאי עלי
 נסכה תצניפה תאריכהא סנה 394 ודכר אלמעלם אבו עלי פי נקצה עלי בן
 נח אסמא עלמא דכרנאהם אנשי מלחמה אנשי חיל יראי אלהים והם אבו
 סעדאן בן אברהם ואבו יצחק אברהם בן אלאצפהאני ואלמעלם סלמן בן
 ירוחם ואבו אברהם בן עלאן ואבו עזרא בן אבונה ואלשיך אבו יעקב בן
 אברהם בן גלס ורבמא אנה אלבציר וכל האולאי כאנו קבלה לאנה קאל
 ענהם ירחמם האל ויזכרם ברצון עמו וסלמון בן ירוחם נע כאן מעאצר
 אלפיומי ואלמעלם אבו סעיד בן אלמעלם אבו עלי הו כאן מעלם אלשיך
 אבו אלפרג בן אסר רח' אֶת לאנה דכר ענה וקאל מעלמנא פלאן וכאן פי
 זמאן אלמעלם אבו אלסרי² לאנה אכתצר תפסירה ורד עליה³ פי ספר
 מצות אלדי לה ואלערישי רח' אֶת דכר אלמעלם אבו סעיד פי ספר
 מצות פי מקאלה אלאביב ואלשיך אבו יעקב בן נח נע קד תקדם דכרה
 אנה כאן לה דאר פי אלקדם אלשריף ללעלם וכאן פיהא עלי מא יקאל
 v. עאלמא" מן גמלתהם אלשיכאן אבו יעקב אלבציר ואלשיך אבו אלפרג
 הארון ואסתמרת בעדה עלי הדה אלצורה וכאן⁴ מן גמלה מן כאן פיהא אבו
 אלפרג הארון ונירה⁵ פי בניסת אלקראיין בדמשק ראו גזו מן תפסיר
 ספר ויקרא רקא" ומן גמלה מא קאל אלמעלם אבו אלסרי פי מנאקצתה
 לבן נח לה 39 סנה פי אלקדם אלשריף (מא כרנת כשפת עלי אלאביב
 פכיף אכבר צורתה)⁶ פדל דלך עלי אסתמראר חאלה עלי הדה אלצורה
 אלמדא אלטווילה רחמהם אֶת ועטם אנרהם: אלשיכין אבו יעקב אלבציר⁷
 ואבו הארון אלמקדסי כאנא⁸ מן גמלה מן קרא עלי בן נח כמא תקדם
 לאנהמא יקולאן ענה פי תצניפהמא קאל שיכנא פלאן⁹ ואלשיך אבו יעקב

¹ MS. אלישך.

² The MS. has אבו אלסרי עלי ולא אנה, which does not make sense. עלי was probably written down as an alternative to אלסרי.

³ MS. עלי.

⁴ Fol. 189 a.

⁵ The MS. has no stop here.

⁶ The exact bearing of the words enclosed in () is difficult to understand; see note 10, p. 439.

⁷ Read אלבציר.

⁸ MS. כאנה.

⁹ The passage enclosed in [] is quoted, in a faulty form, by Firkowicz, בני רשף, p. 22.

תופא אלי רצואן את קבל אלשיך אבו אלפרנ הארון לאן אלשיך אבו אלפרנ ידכרה ויתרצא ענה וונדת שי מן אלאסתבצאר אלדי לה תאריכה פי סנה 1428 והו יקול אדאם עזה תם ונדת לה פי אלרד עלי אלקולין אמלא פי סנה 408 ואלאקרב אן האדאן אלשיכין מע אלמעלם אבו סעיד כאנו כלחם פי עצר ואחד ואנהם כאנו יקרון גמיעהם פי דאר בן נח ואלשיך אבו אלפרנ אבן אסד קאל מעלמנא פלאן רח' את וקיל אנה כאן יקרא עלי אלשיך אבו אלפרנ ובתדתי בתפסיר אלתורה יג' ויא' אלדי הו ניר מבצוט¹ כטה בידה אלכרימה פי שהר רביע אוול סנה 447 ומן גמלה דלך תפסיר ואלה שמות פי גוזין בכטה מדה תצניף כמא ינקלהם פי סבעה אשהר והו פאצי...² ופי אלרמלה אלשיך עלי בן אברהם אלטויל רח' את וכאן בעד אלשיך אבו אלפרנ בן אסד לאנה דכרה פי כתאבה ותרצא ענה ופסר אלארבע ועשרין ספר ואלנשיא שלמה אלמערופ באלריים אבו אלפצל רח' את³ וכאן מן אלעלמא אלכבאר ואלצדור וכאן ריים אלקראין במצר וכאן אמרה ופתאויה נאפדין אלי אלשרק ואלגרב ואלשאם ולם ישתהר ענה תצניף סוא כתאב אלעריות⁴ פכאן פאיכא⁵ פי אלעלם מע אלפקה ולה כתאב מא לא יסע אלמכלף קרבה פי אצול אלדין ותופא אלי רצואן את סנה 447.

עלמא בגדאד ואלעראק רחמהם את אלשיכין אבו⁶ אלחסן בן משיח וסלמון בן ירוחם כאנא פי זמאן אלפיומי וכאן בן משיח נאקצה מנאקצאת כתירה פי בגדאד ובן ירוחם נאקצה פי חלב ותופא בהא רח' את פי זמאן אלפיומי וזרן פי גנאותהא משקוק אלתיאב מדאר אלשראבה חאפיא⁷ ועתב פי דלך וקאל אן כאן לי ולה פי מנאקצתנא פואיד עטימה ולא שך פי עלמה פלדלך פעלת מא פעלת ויוערף אליום פי חלב קבר סלמון בן ירוחם ובין אלגוים וזירהם⁸ בקבר אלצדיק וינדרו⁹ לה אלנדור¹⁰ אלי אלאן : ואבו עיסי בן סרעה¹¹ פי רסאלתה אלתם סבעין¹² רד פיהא עלי אליהוד תם אנה באבן משיח אלמדכור ותנאדרא¹³ הו והו ואלרסאלה אלמדכורה תאריכה עמלה סנה 447 ואברהם אלהרזלאני רח' את רד עלי אלרזאנין ובטל כלמהם ומן גמלה מן דכר מן אלעלמא יוסף בן צבתיא וונדת כתאבין

¹ מבסוט.² A lacuna in the MS.³ Fol. 189 b.⁴ MS. אלעריות.⁵ MS. אבי.⁶ MS. וזירה.⁷ The MS. has 7 (without a dot) for the Arabic 3.⁸ The Arab writers spell the name زعدة (זיעה).⁹ See note 6, p. 441.¹⁰ The 7 stands here for ط (وتناظرا).

פי עלם אלכלאם לעלי בן יוסף סמייה תאריכה סנה 1014 וכאתבה יתרצא ענה ולצדקה בן שומרון רח' את ואלשיך חנניה בן יעקב רח' את כאן מן אלצדור אלכבאר וכאן פאיא" פי אלפקה ועלם אלכלאם ולה כלאם אלתצפה כתאב אלסראר כמס מנלדאת והי פי גאיה אלחסן ולם יגד מנה סווא מנלדין אלאוול ואלתאני והו ידכר ען ואלדה רח' את ארא כאנת תדל עלי אנה פי אלעלם וקיל אנה כאן יברי אלקלאם ללכליפה וכאן גליל אלקדר ענה וכאן פי אלעלם ¹ פי טבקת אלבציר ובן אסד רח' את אלגמיע ובן סקויה רח' את רד עלי אלרבאני ועלי אלפיומי פי אלהאל ואלאביב ואלענצרה ואלאליה ואלשחם ואלתקליד ואבטל נקלהם ואלשיך אבו ענן יצחק בן עלי בן יצחק רח' את כאן צדרא" כבירא" ורד עלי אלפיומי בכתאב כאלסראן ולה כתאב פי אלאעתדאל ואלאקרב אנה כאן מן משאך אלעלם ואלצדור אלכבאר ואלשיך שמואל בן אשר בן מנצור אלמערוף באבו אלטייב אלגבלי כאן פי זמאן אלשיך אבר אלפרג הארון ותנאצרא פי אלאביב ואלסנה אלשרעיה וכאן עלי ראי אלמולי אבו עלי רח' את ולה מקאלה פי אפסאד אלמחזור וחסאב אלמולד ורד ² עלי מנחם ראש מתיבא ענד וקופה עלי רקעה בן מנחם אלי אביתאבת איידה את ואלשיך אבו ³ סעיד כלף מנחם עלי אלכלאם ולה כתאב גייד ואלשיך ישר בן חסד בן ישר אלדסתרי רח' את כאן מן אלעלמא אלכבאר ולה כתאב אלתלויח פי עלם אלכלאם פי אלפאצהם ובראהינהם ורד עלי אלפיומי איצא ולה כתאב פי אלאעתדאל וכתב כתירא" מן אלפקה אלמדכל תם אלשיך שלמה בן מברך בן צעיר צאבא או צאחב ⁴ אלתייסיר תם אלשיך עלי בן שלמה צאחב אלאגרון אלמכתצר תם מר' אהרן בן אליהו אלקסמטניני תם מר' ור' יהודה האבל בן אליהו הדסי תם מר' ישראל הדיין תם מר' יפת בן צעיר הנודע באלחכים אלצפי תם מר' ישעיהו בן עזיהו הכהן הנודע המלמד פאצל תם מר' שמואל המלמד בן משה הנודע באלסני תם מר' שמואל בן משה הרופא המערבי צאחב אלמסאלה ואלגואב וספר מצות וויצא מקדמאת עלי אלמסאלה ואלגואב והו אכר אלעלמא ואלחכמא ואלמרשרין אלי אלחק והמשכילים זיהירו וגו' ותם אן ללקראיין מן אלעלמא אלדי למ ערפנאהם ולא וקפנא עלי כתבהם :

ושלום על ישראל :

¹ Fol. 190a.

² MS. ורדה.

³ MS. אבי.

⁴ The copyist thus correcting himself.

III.—TRANSLATION.

In the name of the Lord, the God of eternity, shall we labour and succeed.

We shall now begin the Chronicle of the righteous Sheikh Ibn al-Hitī, may God, the exalted One, favour him :—

I will now mention the names of famous Karaite Doctors—may God, the exalted One, favour them—of whom I have found a record. First, the Sayyid 'Anan, may his rest be in glory. He was the first who succeeded in unveiling the truth after it had been shrouded over, and he resuscitated it, and he poured out his soul unto death. It is said that he lived in the time of Abu Ja'far al-Mansūr¹ who succeeded to the throne of the Khalifs in the year 136 of the Hijrah. He was the chief of the whole house of captive Israel in Bagdad, and he converted many of the Rabbanites to the truth, that is to the tenets of the Karaites, may their Rock and their Redeemer preserve them. After him were Daniel al-Ḳumisi² and David al-Muḳammas³, and he wrote a book on the fundamental principles of the law. These [two] were before Ḳirḳisānī—may God, the exalted One, have mercy on him—for he has mentioned them in the “Book of Lights,” and he has also mentioned bodies of people, namely the followers of Isma'il³, and the Okbarites³, and the people of Tustar, and Bagdad, and Baṣrah, and the Persians, and the people of Khurāsān, and the people of the mountain, and the Syrians⁴. He has not mentioned individual names, but only the difference in their opinions.

With regard to the learned Sheikh Ya'kūb ben Yiṣḥāk al-Ḳirḳisānī, it is to be noted that the date at which he composed the “Book of

¹ By using the term וְקָל “and it is said,” Ibn al-Hitī betrays uncertainty on a point which is now established beyond a doubt.

² The exact time of Daniel al-Ḳumisi's activity is not quite certain; comp. Fürst, *Geschichte des Karäerthums*, i. 78, and Hamburger, *Die Jüdische Literatur*, ii. 72, with S. Poznański, *JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW*, vol. VIII, p. 681. Ibn al-Hitī's collocation of Daniel al-Ḳumisi and David al-Muḳammas favours Poznański's statement that the former flourished at the beginning of the tenth century, for the latter was certainly famous in the earlier part of the same century.

³ Isma'il himself is styled אִלְעִבְרִי, and it, therefore, seems that by the Okbarites named after him are meant the followers of מִישִׁיָּהוּ, who was a townsman of Isma'il (see Harkavy, *Transactions of the Imperial Russian Archaeological Society*, vol. VIII, pp. 314-16; also Bacher, *JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW*, vol. VII, pp. 706-708).

⁴ All the bodies of people mentioned here are spoken of in Hark., *op. cit.*, pp. 314-19.

Lights" was the year one thousand two hundred and seventy-eight¹ of the era of contracts, or in the year 315 of the Hijrah. As for the Sayyid David ben Boaz²—may the Lord, the exalted One, have mercy on him—the composition of his work on Ecclesiastes took place in the year 383 of the Hijrah, and he also wrote a commentary on the Pentateuch and a book on [its] fundamental principles. And the Doctor Abu al-Sarī—may God, the exalted One, have mercy on him—lived before Saadyah the Pithomite, for he argued against³ Kīrkisānī in his commentary on the Pentateuch and in his "Book on the

¹ The year 1278 of contracts answers to 967 A.D., but the greater part of 315 A.H. coincides with 927 A.D. The date 937, which has been assigned to the composition of the "Kitāb ul-Anwār" by several writers (see Bacher, *JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW*, vol. VII, p. 687; Poznański, *Steinschn. Festschrift*, p. 196), really belongs to Kīrkisānī's Commentary on the Pentateuch (see the passage given by Neubauer, in *Mediaeval Jewish Chronicles*, vol. II, p. 249, which, according to p. xiv in the same volume, is taken from the above-mentioned Commentary). In the Introduction to his longer Commentary on the Pentateuch, Kīrkisānī's says:—

ونشرح معانها التي هي غير الفرائض والوصايا اذ كن قد تكلمنا

على الفرائض وافردنا لها كتاب مجرد (Brit. Mus. MS. Or. 2557, fol. 1 b)

The "Kitāb ul-Anwār," which deals with the commandments contained in the Pentateuch, was accordingly composed before the Commentary which treats on the rest of its contents, and if the latter was written in the year 937 A.D., it is not unlikely that the date 927 is the correct one for the composition of the former. The collocation of 1278 A.C. with 315 A.H. is a serious mistake, and is probably due to a blunder of the scribe.

² רור בן בנ is reported to have been the fifth in the line of descent from Anan (see Pinsker קדמוניות, לק' קא, 53), and, therefore, much earlier than A.H. 383 (A.D. 993). See, however, Harkavy, *Stade's Zeitschrift*, vol. I, p. 157. On the works of this Karaite doctor we obtain here fresh information.

³ The argument in proof of Abu al-Sarī having lived after Saadyah is as follows: Abu al-Sarī argues against Kīrkisānī. The latter is, therefore, prior to the former. But Saadyah was prior to Kīrkisānī, the senior of Abu al-Sarī, and it, therefore, follows that Saadyah was certainly prior to Abu al-Sarī. The priority of Saadyah to Kīrkisānī is similarly established by the fact that Israel ben Daniel (or rather Daniel) who was prior to Kīrkisānī, already argues against Saadyah. It will be seen that unless the emendations עליה for עלי, and בנר for קנל, are made in the text, the passage is without logical sense. Ibn al-Hitī's effort to establish a chronology was most praiseworthy; but we now know for certain that Abu al-Sarī (סרר בן מלח) lived about the time of Saadyah, as was also the case with Kīrkisānī.

Commandments," but Fayyami was before Kīrkisānī, for Israel ben Daniel¹—may God, the exalted One, have mercy on him—argued against him, and Solomon han-Nāsī mentions him in his "Book on forbidden marriages," before² Kīrkisānī and the Doctor Abu al-Sarī; and the likelihood is that when he mentioned the learned, may their memory be blessed, he recorded them in their chronological order, for he mentions first 'Anan, then Benjamin, then Daniel³, then Kīrkisānī, then Abu al-Sarī, then Abu 'Alī al-Baṣrī and his son⁴, then David ben Boaz⁵ the Nāsī, then the Doctor Abu 'Alī⁶—may God, the exalted One, have mercy on them all. It is likely that he⁷ was a contemporary of the Sheikh Abu Ya'kūb Yūsuf ben Noah⁸, for he has argued against him extensively⁹ with regard to 'Abīb, and the Sheikhs Abu Ya'kūb al-Baṣīr and Abu al-Faraj Hārūn were of those who came down¹⁰ to the Sheikh Abu Ya'kūb, and these [are mentioned] on a copy of his composition which is dated in the year 393¹¹. And Abu 'Alī, in his refutations of Ben Noah, has mentioned the names of learned men whose memory is that of men of battle, men of might, god-fearing men; these are Abu Sa'dān ben Abraham, and Abu Yiṣḥāḳ Abraham ben al-Ispahānī, and the Doctor Salomon ben Yerōḥim, and Abraham

¹ Israel ben Daniel אִשְׂרָאֵל בֶּן דָּנִיֵּאל lived about 100 years after Kīrkisānī (see Pinsker, *op. cit.*, pp. מה, רשו). One should probably substitute דָּנִיֵּאל for יִשְׂרָאֵל בֶּן דָּנִיֵּאל (vide *infra*).

² See note ³ on preceding page.

³ On משה הקומי בן דָּנִיֵּאל, who has already been mentioned, see Pinsker, *op. cit.*, p. מה.

⁴ i. e. Abu Sa'id (ר' לוי הלוי המלמד) son of Yefeth ben 'Alī, here called Abu 'Alī al-Baṣrī (see Pinsker, *op. cit.*, p. קסז).

⁵ On David ben Boaz, see above.

⁶ This Abu 'Alī is known as an opponent of Abu al-Sarī in legal interpretations of the Pentateuch (see Brit. Mus. MSS., Or. 2573, 2574), but it does not yet appear certain what other name or names he bore. He may have been Abu 'Alī Ḥasan al-Levi al-Baṣrī, grandfather of Yefeth. As Ibn al-Hitī has already failed in his chronology on other points, it would be no wrong to him to imagine that he is here guilty of another chronological error.

⁷ i. e. (apparently) Abu al-Sarī.

⁸ Ibn al-Hitī has, as will be seen in what follows, much to tell us about this Karaite doctor, who has hitherto not been much more than an unknown quantity. See e. g. Pinsker, *op. cit.*, pp. כה, 74, 75; Harkavy, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

⁹ This does not appear an entirely conclusive argument, for extensive refutations may be written of works whose authors have died long since.

¹⁰ i. e. to attend his lectures.

¹¹ A. D. 1002-3.

ben 'Ilān¹, and Abu Ezra ben Abūnah, and the Sheikh Abu Ya'kūb ben Abraham ben Jils who is, perhaps, identical with Al-Baṣīr. And all these were before him², for in speaking of them, he says: "May God have mercy on them, and remember them in the acceptance of His people." And Salomon ben Yerōhim—may his soul be in Eden—was a contemporary of al-Fayyūmī, and the Doctor Abu Sa'id, son of the Doctor Abu 'Alī³, was the teacher of the Sheikh Abu al-Faraj ben Asad⁴—may God, the exalted One, have mercy on him; for in mentioning him, he says: "Our teacher N. N." He⁵ was in the time of Abu al-Sarī, for he made an abridgement of his commentary, and argued against him in his "Book on the Commandments." And 'Arīshī⁶—may God, the exalted One, have mercy on him—mentioned the Doctor Abu Sa'id in his "Book on the Commandments," in the chapter on "Abīb."

The Sheikh Abu Ya'kūb ben Noah, of whom mention has already been made, had a college in Jerusalem, and there were there, according to report, seventy learned men. Of their number were the two Sheikhs Abu Ya'kūb al-Baṣīr and Abu al-Faraj Hārūn, and it continued after him in the same condition⁷, and of the number who lived there were Abu al-Faraj Hārūn⁸, and others. In the Synagogue of the Karaites in Damascus has been seen a part of the commentary on Leviticus⁹, written on parchment, and among the things which the Doctor Abu al-Sarī said in his refutation of Ben Noah [is contained the statement that] he lived thirty years in Jerusalem . . .¹⁰. This testifies to his continuance for a long time in the same condition—may God, the exalted One, have mercy on them, and give them a good reward.

¹ ר'ר מרדכי יוסף אברהם בן עילן הנבלי A.

² Apparently before Abu 'Alī, who records their names.

³ i. e. Yefeth ben Alī, 'Abu Sa'id being his best known son; vide *supra*.

⁴ Full name: Abu al-Faraj Furkān ibn Asad, or ישורון בן יהודה. The British Museum possesses several volumes of his Commentary (existing in a longer and shorter recension) on the Pentateuch; see Hark., *loc. cit.*, p. 159; Neubauer, *Aus der Petersb. Bibliothek*, pp. 19, 20.

⁵ i. e. Abu Sa'id?

⁶ To be identified with קרש בן יהודה?

⁷ i. e. as a seat of learning.

⁸ Ibn al-Hitī apparently means that Abu al-Faraj Hārūn who already resided in Jerusalem in the lifetime of Abu Ya'kūb Yusuf ben Noah continued to live there after that doctor's death.

⁹ By Abu al-Sarī, who is mentioned immediately after.

¹⁰ The words: "מה זרנו כשהוא על אלאבי פכף אנבר צורה" "what I have brought out and revealed concerning 'Abīb, and how shall I make known its shape or condition," make no sense in the context. Something has probably dropped out from the text.

The two Sheikhs Abu Ya'kūb al-Baṣīr¹ and Abu Hārūn al-Muqadasi² were of the number of those who attended the lectures of Ben Noah, as has already been said, for they refer to him in their compositions by saying: "Our Sheik N. N. has said." And the Sheikh Abu Ya'kūb passed away before the Sheikh Abu al-Faraj Hārūn, for the Sheikh Abu al-Faraj in mentioning him, uses the phrase: "May He favour him"; and I have found a portion of the "Istibṣār"³, which he has composed, its date being 428⁴, where he says: "May He prolong his dignity"⁵. I have also found a composition of his on the refutation of the two utterances⁶, which was dictated in the year 458⁷. It is likely that these two Sheikhs, together with the Doctor Abu Sa'īd, were all in the same generation, and that they all studied in the College of Ben Noah. The Sheikh Abu al-Faraj ibn Asad said [in speaking of them]: "Our teachers N. N., may God, the exalted One, have mercy on them," and it is said that he attended the lectures of the Sheikh Abu al-Faraj⁸, and he began his shorter Commentary on the "Torah"—may He make it great and full of glory—which he wrote with his own honoured hand, in the month Rabī' I, of the year 446⁹. To this belongs the commentary on Exodus, in two parts, in his own writing, the copying whereof occupied seven months . . .¹⁰

In Ramlah there was the Sheikh 'Ali ben Abraham at-Ṭawīl—may God, the exalted One, have mercy on him. He lived after the Sheikh Abu al-Faraj ibn Asad, for he mentions him in his book, using the phrase: "May He favour him;" and he wrote a commentary on the whole Bible. And the Nāsī Solomon, who is known by the title ar-Rā'is abu al-Faḍl—may God, the exalted One, have mercy on him—was one of the most eminent and foremost scholars. He was the chief of the Karaites in Egypt, and his command and decisions went

¹ See the text.

² The same as Abu al-Faraj Hārūn.

³ Of Yūsuf al-Baṣīr. The Brit. Mus. MS., Or. 2576, contains a work entitled *אשר יאמר פי אלמסחור*, which is possibly the composition referred to in this place.

⁴ A. D. 1036-7.

⁵ Of Abu al-Faraj Hārūn (?), showing that the latter was alive when Yūsuf al-Baṣīr wrote the work in question.

⁶ A very vague reference indeed.

⁷ A. D. 1065-6.

⁸ i. e. Abu al-Faraj Hārūn.

⁹ A. D. 1054-5. The date of the longer Commentary, as given in Or. 2495 (fol. 75 b), is A. D. 1050. It will be seen that Ibn al-Hitī is here in a correct chronological line.

¹⁰ The MS. has a lacuna here; *אשר*, as a complete word, cannot be correct in this place.

forth into the east, and the west, and into Syria; but no other work by him, except the book on forbidden marriages, is known to us. He was most distinguished in scholarship, and also in jurisprudence. He also wrote a book entitled, "Things which the person on whom the obligation rests cannot approach¹," which is a treatise on the fundamental principles of the Law². He passed away in the year 600.

Of the learned of Bagdad and 'Irāk are to be mentioned the two Sheikhs Abu al-Ḥasan ben Mashiah and Salomon ben Yerōḥim, who lived in the time of al-Fayyūmī. Ben Mashiah argued much against him in Bagdad, and Ben Yerōḥim argued against him in Aleppo, and he died there—may God, the exalted One, have mercy on him—in the time of al-Fayyūmī, who attended his funeral with his garments torn, girded with a rope, and barefoot; and when he was blamed for it, he said: "We both derived much profit from our controversies, and there is no doubt about his learning, and, therefore, have I acted as I have done³." And the grave of Salomon ben Yerōḥim is known to this day in Aleppo, and among the Gentiles and others⁴ as the grave of the righteous one, and vows are made to him to the present day.

Abu 'Isā ben Zar'ah⁵ in his epistle entitled "Ilthām Sab'in⁶" (?) argued against the Jews; then came the above-mentioned Ibn Mashiah, and they controverted each other, and the date of the composition of this epistle is the year 387⁷. Abraham al-Harselani⁸—may God, the exalted One, have mercy on him—argued against the Rabbanites, and refuted their opinions. Among the number

¹ The phrase is a difficult one. Two similar titles of books are found in Ḥajī Khalfā, v. 354. See Dozy, *Supplém. aux Dict. Arabes*, iii. 485.

² Fürst's remark that Solomon the Nāsī wrote a *Sefer Mišwōth* (*Gesch. d. Kar.* ii. 192) is, therefore, a correct one.

³ A fine feature in Saadyah character. The incident is evidently narrated as a testimony to the worth of Salomon ben Yerōḥim. It cannot be doubted, however, that it *may* be true in substance.

⁴ It is difficult to see who are meant here by "the others"; hardly the Rabbanite Jews.

⁵ See Steinsch., *Polemische u. apologetische Literatur*, pp. 148, 149. Ibn Abi Usaib'ah makes express mention of the *Risālah* (vol. II, p. 236).

⁶ סבין may possibly be a corruption of סביר, for it was the Jewish mathematician, Ibn Shu'aib, to whom the "*Risālah*" was addressed (see Steinsch., *loc. cit.*). The reading "Ilthām" (אִלְתָּאָם for אִלְתָּאָם) is a conjecture of Dr. Rieu, whom I have had the privilege of consulting on this and several other points. The meaning would be "the striking of Sab'in."

⁷ A. D. 997.

⁸ This Karaite is mentioned in מדרכי דוד.

of the learned men whom he mentions is Yūsuf ben Šabtiyya¹, and I have found two books on dogmatic theology by 'Alī ben Yūsuf Samiyyah, dated in the year 459², and the scribe [of the copy] uses of him and of Šadaḳah ben Shomron—may God, the exalted One, have mercy on him—the phrase “May God favour them.” And the Sheikh Ḥananyah ben Ya'kūb—may God, the exalted One, have mercy on him—was one of the foremost and great ones. He was most distinguished in jurisprudence and dogmatic theology, and he wrote a work entitled, “A treatise of minute investigation,” which is a book of “secrets,” in five volumes, and it is exceedingly beautiful, but there are only extant of it two volumes, the first and the second. He quotes opinions of his father—may God, the exalted One, have mercy on him—which show that he was also a learned man. It is said that he used to cut the Khalif's pen for him, and he had much power at his court. He belonged to the learned group of al-Bašīr and Ben Asad—may God, the exalted One, have mercy on them all. Ben Saḳuyah³—may God, the exalted One, have mercy on him—argued against the Rabbanites and [especially] against al-Fayyūmī with regard to the new moon, and Abīb, and Pentecost, [and the laws relating to] the fat tail and the fat, as well as regards tradition; and he refuted their tradition. And the Sheikh Abu 'Anan Yiṣḥāk ben Ali ben Yiṣḥāk—may God, the exalted One, have mercy on him—was a great and foremost scholar, and he argued against al-Fayyūmī in a book like the “Sirāj⁴,” and he wrote a book on “Equalization⁵.” The likelihood is that he was one of the chief scholars and the foremost men [of his time]. The Sheikh Samuel ben Asher ben Maṣṣūr, who is known by the name of Abu al-Ṭayyib al-Jabali⁶, was in the time of the Sheikh Abu al-Faraj Hārūn, and they controverted each other with regard to “Abīb” and the legal year. He held the opinion of the Master Abu 'Alī—may God, the exalted One, have mercy on him—and he wrote a treatise on the refutation of the calendar⁷, and the calculation of the new moon. He also argued against Menaḥem, the head of the Academy⁸, after having studied the epistle of Ben Menaḥem to Abu Thābīt—may God,

¹ Is צבתיא a corruption of צבתי?

² A. D. 1066-67.

³ See e. g. Pinsker, *op. cit.*, p. כז.

⁴ i. e. like the ספר השיר or “Kitāb ul-Sirāj” of Yusuf al-Bašīr.

⁵ The title is vague enough. ⁶ See Pinsker, *op. cit.*, pp. עכז, 37.

⁷ כדורי, lit. “cycle,” the years being arranged in cycles of nineteen years in the calendar.

⁸ Head (with Mar Mathatia as opposing Gaon) of the academy at Pumbedstha, in the middle of the ninth century.

the exalted One, strengthen him. And the Sheikh Abu Sa'īd¹ controverted Menahem on the subject of dogmatic theology, and he wrote an excellent book. The Sheikh Yashar ben Ḥesed ben Yashar al-Tustarī²—may God, the exalted One, have mercy on him—was one of the great scholars, and he wrote a “Book of Indications” on dogmatic theology in their language and their mode of argumentation. He also argued against al-Fayyūmī, and wrote a book on “Equalization,” and he wrote much on foreign law. Then comes the Sheikh Solomon ben Mubarrak ben Ṣa'īr, the author of “Al-Taisīr³.” Then the Sheikh 'Alī ben Sulaiman, the author of the abridged “Egrōn⁴.” Then our Master Aaron ben Elijah, of Constantinople. Then our Master and Lord Yehūdah ha-Abēl ben Elijah Hedessi. Then our Master Israel had-Dayyan; then our Master Yefeth ben Ṣa'īr, who is known by the title of the “famous physician”; then our Master Isaiah ben 'Uzziyahu hak-Kohen, who is known by the title of the “illustrious Doctor”; then our Master Samuel the Teacher, son of Moses, who is known by the name of al-Sinni⁵; then Samuel ben Moses ha-Rōfē, the Maghrebite, the author of the “Questions and Answers,” and of a book on the Commandments, and also of Introductions to the “Questions and Answers.” He is the last of the learned and wise men, who are guides to the truth, and the “Maskilim⁶” shall shine, &c. There are also learned Karaites whom we do not know and whose writings we have not studied. Peace be upon Israel.

G. MARGOLIOUTH.

¹ It is difficult to say who this Abu Sa'īd was, if Menahem Gaon, of the ninth century, was the authority against whom he wrote, for Yefeth's son flourished more than a century later.

² See Hark., *op. cit.*, p. 158. The British Museum possesses a philosophical work by this writer, entitled, *At-Tahwīḥ ila't-Tauḥīd wa'l-'Adl*. His Arabic name was 'Abu'l-Faḍl Sahl (Hark., *Sahl Ibn Faḍl*).

³ See Hark., *op. cit.*, pp. 158, 159.

⁴ See e. g. Neub., *op. cit.*, p. 18.

⁵ See Pinsker, *op. cit.*, p. 125, where a שמואל בן משה בן שני (or שמואל בני שני) is recorded.

⁶ A title which the Karaites (of Jerusalem only?—see Neub., *op. cit.*, p. 7) took to themselves in allusion to Dan. xii. 3.